



Curriculum Policy

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Mission Statement

‘To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ’s Gospel’

Curriculum

Thornton College is committed to delivering a high-quality education in line with our mission statement.

The Curriculum aims to offer a broad and balanced education to all day and boarding students, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn and make progress. All students should receive a rich provision of classroom and extra-curricular activities that develop a range of character attributes, such as resilience, self-motivation, self-control and respect for others and self, which underpin success in education and employment.

The Curriculum should encourage students:-

- To prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in British Society
- To enjoy and take responsibility for their learning experiences
- To develop lively, enquiring, clear thinking, imaginative and creative minds and an ability to question and argue rationally
- To develop interests and skills that will enable them to contribute to and enjoy the benefits of society
- To develop a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs
- To understand the world in which we live and the inter-dependence of individuals, groups, nations and the environment
- To develop and live the values of Christ’s Gospel

To ensure that these aims are met the Governors, Head Teacher of Thornton College and teachers of Thornton College offer a curriculum that includes:

- Religious education and collective worship for all students
- Personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the school’s aim and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.
- Access to a range of courses to suit the needs of a wide range of students
- Experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
- The opportunity for students to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
- A range of cross curricular topics
- A wide range of co-curricular activities
- Appropriate progression through the key stages and beyond
- Continuity and links with the further education sector

- Access to accurate, up-to-date and impartial careers guidance that enables students to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- Differentiation ensures students of all ages, aptitudes and needs have access to appropriate curriculum opportunities, including those students with special educational needs, and an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. The opportunity for *all* to learn and make progress, including those of exceptional ability, those with special educational needs and those who may come from a disadvantaged background and, in consequence, have delayed attainment. (See Teaching and Learning Policy)
Appropriate assessment, recording and reporting of attainment and progress of students.
- Homework
- A curriculum which is an effective preparation for future life within British society.

Preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life in British Society.

Classroom and extracurricular activities across the school will help to develop a range of character attributes such as resilience and grit, which underpin success in education and employment. The curriculum will aim to ensure that all students develop the values, skills and behaviours needed to succeed in life.

British Values

The government set out its definition of 'British values' in its 'Prevent Strategy' and the DfE subsequently reinforced the need "to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs". The promotion of these values is not something new at Thornton College; these values have always been integral to our vision and ethos and are reinforced throughout our Curriculum. See British Values Policy.

PSHE

The PSHE curriculum at Thornton College reflects the school's aim and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

A wide range of sources, including the PSHE Association, are consulted in the drawing up of policy, plans and schemes of work. The College considers, amongst other things, the ages of students and their learning abilities in order to ensure the curriculum is delivered appropriately. See PSHE Policy.

Opportunity to learn and make progress:

Teaching throughout the school enables *all* students to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop new skills. Lessons are planned and taught to ensure that all students are actively pushed towards *increased* achievement, thereby making good progress according to their ability.

The schemes of work in all subjects must take proper account of the needs of all students, in terms of ability, need and aptitudes.

The curriculum is designed so that all students at the school can learn and make progress.

See Teaching and Learning policy for further information on how the school seeks to provide a secure and challenging learning environment that enables students to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop their skills.

The following registers and tracking systems enable teachers to have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students so that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons:

- More Able and Talented register – held on iSams
- SEND register – held on iSams
- INSIGHT (Prep School)
- SISRA (Senior School)
- Intervention Log (Senior School)

See Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will regularly monitor the curriculum. Appropriate recommendations for change will be made to the Head Teacher who will consult the Governing Body before implementing any changes through targets and developments outlined in the School Development Plan. Evaluation of the curriculum will be measured against a range of indicators including:

- Examination results
- Destinations of school leavers
- Departmental Reports
- Regular meetings with Heads of Department and Prep Subject Coordinators
- Student surveys
- Reports to the Governing body
- Parental feedback

Retention of mock examination papers – Years 11 and 13

All Heads of Department of students taking GCSE qualifications and/or A Level and equivalent qualifications are required to retain either digital or physical copies of mock examination papers, as a contingency in case of emergency. This will be achieved either by 1. Departmental staff scanning and retaining digital copies of papers, with physical copies kept by the student, or by 2. Students scanning their examination papers, with the physical copies being retained by the Head of Department in storage. This process will be repeated for the January and May mock examinations, for students in Years 11 and 13.

As students' progress through Thornton College, they should increasingly show:

- A positive self-image

- Effective use of the skills of numeracy, literacy and speaking and listening skills
- Positive links with the local community
- An appreciation of the natural and man-made world
- Independence, motivation and self-discipline
- An appreciation of human aspirations and achievement
- The ability to work actively together in co-operative groups
- The competences and attitudes needed for adult life
- Resilience and independence
- The values of Christ's Gospel

Pre-Prep and Prep School

The combination of exceptional care with inspirational and innovative teaching ensures that a Thornton Prep education is special. The Prep follows the national curriculum as a basis but has adopted and developed innovative teaching methods which include the mastery approach in Maths, a Creative Curriculum, which combines Arts and Humanities through topic teaching (Years 1 to 4), and programming in Computer Science. Each girl will also develop a range of skills as part of our Forest School Curriculum. In the upper part of the Prep school, subjects are often taught by subject specialists. This year (2025-2026) the Prep will be introducing the ISEB Project Qualification in the upper Prep as part of our enrichment and co-curricular programme.

The Senior School Curriculum

The Senior School Curriculum is diverse and exciting with additional breadth provided as the students move up the school. We offer girls every opportunity to excel and encourage them to make the most of their educational experience and to develop skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects.

GCSE subjects and options:

Art
 Business Studies
 Citizenship
 Computer Science
 Design and Technology
 Drama
 French
 Geography
 History
 Mathematics
 Music
 PE
 Photography
 Psychology
 RE
 Separate Sciences: Biology, Chemistry, Physics
 Spanish

Plus the Electives Programme in Year 10, comprising the Foundation/Higher Project Qualification, STEM Crest Award, Young Enterprise and Volunteering. Students are able to select an elective in place of an option choice to study in Year 10.

The Sixth Form Curriculum

Thornton College has a strong tradition of academic success at GCSE and is building on that through its curriculum at Sixth Form. This is achieved through a combination of excellent teaching, superb facilities and a strong pastoral care system that enables each student to achieve her true potential.

There are many features that make Thornton College Sixth Form Curriculum distinctive:

- Smaller classes and tutor groups, taught by A Level specialists. Dedicated communal facilities, such as the Common rooms and Resource Room
- A wide range of A Level subjects
- The Extended Project Qualification
- A broad core curriculum that continues to develop interests and skills beyond the A Level specifications; this includes PE, RE and Horizons
- Specialist support for those wishing to apply to Oxford, Cambridge or International universities.
- Specialist support for those wishing to apply for apprenticeship programmes
- Specialist support for those wishing to apply for Medicine and Law courses
- A specialist careers programme
- A varied and rich co-curricular activities programme
- Access to vocational qualifications as well as academic qualifications
- Opportunities to develop leadership skills in a range of roles

Opportunities to prepare for the transition from school to Higher Education, with a dress code and individual study periods to develop independent learning

Thornton College offers a wide range of subjects and courses to appeal to a variety of students with varying academic profiles. The majority of courses are A levels, but we have extended our provision to include popular vocational courses.

A Level Courses

Art, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, Government & Politics, History, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Photography, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish, Religious Studies, Drama.

Vocational Qualifications

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diplomas - Health and Social Care, Art and Design

Level 3 National Diploma - Forensic and Criminal Investigation

Plus:

Extended Project (EPQ)

Careers:

Thornton College offers a Careers Programme that provides access to up-to-date careers guidance that is suitable to the relevant age group. Advice given as part of the Careers programme is presented in an impartial manner, enabling students to make informed choices. It will include timely advice to help students choose GCSE and post-16 options as well as choose from a broad range of career

options. Support offered to every student enables them to consider a wide variety of pathways and to fulfil their potential.
See Careers Policy.

Special Educational Needs

See SEND Policy

SEND support is that which is provided for students that have significantly greater difficulty in learning than their peers and it is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for others of the same age. Where a child with SEND and/or a disability has specific learning needs which are not a reasonable adjustment, school and/or parents may apply to the relevant local authority for an Educational Health Care Plan.

It is only those independent schools that are on the section 41 list or relevant early years' providers that must have regard to the SEND CODE OF PRACTICE 2015 AND THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014. As such, parents / guardians should contact the Head Teacher to discuss provision before naming the College on any EHC Plan.

Thornton College is a non-selective school and in accordance with its current admission policy, any students with an EHC plan must meet the following criteria;

- The applicant's learning needs can be met within the classroom.
- Meeting the applicant's needs will not be detrimental to the learning of the applicant and/or other students in the group

For those students with an EHC Plan who meet our admissions criteria, or who gain an EHC Plan whilst on roll, the College will endeavour to meet the practical responsibility of day to day provision set out in the Plan as far as possible and providing this is compatible with Thornton College's efficient use of resources. The Plan will be reviewed annually.

Parents can seek funding from their local authority for the cost of additional provision as set out in an EHC plan to enable access to learning by way of personal budgets and direct payments awarded by local authorities, however such payments cannot be used to pay for school fees. It is possible for them to be used to pay for some SEND provision and local authorities should offer parents guidance on the award and use of personal budgets and direct payments.

At Thornton College, where a student who is wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2016) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that student is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State.

At Thornton College, where a student with an EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a local authority or other body through public funds is registered at the school, such information as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the EHC plan is provided to the responsible local authority and they are invited to contribute to the annual review for the student. The school adheres to the relevant Local Authority process and documentation (either Northampton, Milton Keynes or Bucks Local Authorities depending on the home address of the student concerned.) An annual review, chaired by the Head of Learning Development or Head, will review the targets and provision laid out in the plan. Recommendations are sent to the Local Authority informing them of any necessary changes.

Under Part 6 of Schedule 1 of the SEND Code of Practice - Where a student with a statement or EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a Local Authority or other body through public funds is registered at

the school, such information as may be reasonably required for the purpose of the annual review of the statement or EHC plan is provided to the responsible Local Authority. Particulars of educational and welfare provision for students with statements or EHC plans is made available to parents of students and parents of prospective students and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.

Relevant Early Years' providers must have regard to the Code and if they are not able to follow the advice in it, they should explain this to the Local Authority. Only section 41 schools are required to adhere to all of the 'musts' in the Code. This is important given that some independent early years providers, such as Thornton College, may be small and may not have the resources to comply with the requirements set out in the Code.

IT provision

Thornton College uses full-fibre broadband connection to provide the capacity and space needed for effective use of online learning tools. This enables teachers to have confidence to make use of online resources as integral parts of teaching and learning and uses cloud-based solutions instead of on-site technical infrastructure, products or services.

Thornton College has a connection which meets the required capacity to deliver 1Gbps download and upload speed.

At Thornton College, there is a whole school approach to online safety, to protect and educate students and staff in their use of technology. The approach ensures we are able to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. This standard is also met through the ongoing requirements as set out in the statutory safeguarding guidance on keeping children safe in education.

See BYOD policy for further information about our commitment to providing a technology-rich learning environment that empowers students to be creative, collaborative, and independent learners. See AI policy for further information about how the school is working to create a responsible, inclusive environment for the use of AI in education—one that upholds the principles of privacy, fairness, and transparency for the benefit of all members of Thornton College community.

Co-Curricular programme

Students have access to an extensive and varied co-curricular programme at all key stages. Students are expected to attend at least one co-curricular activity per week, and are encouraged to participate in more. The co-curricular programme is managed through Evolve and students are able to sign up for clubs on this platform.

Each club is linked to a Thrive theme, enabling students to build a portfolio of skills over each academic year. Themes include: independent decision making, challenge, resilience, spirituality, physical and mental wellbeing, and enterprise.

Curriculum adaptation

In line with our mission statement and with our curriculum statement, Thornton College is very supportive of the development of our students in sporting, musical, dramatic and other extra-curricular activities outside of school at all levels, to use their talents to the full. We do recognise that

there may be a need in some cases to make accommodations within the curriculum, where a student is performing or aspiring to perform at elite/national level.

As a school, we will look to adapt the curriculum in order to provide the student with time out of school for training and development. This will be relevant for individual students who are on a specific pathway, e.g. GB development pathway/national development squad/ performance at a national level. This must be confirmed by the current coach/agent/manager via a reference.

- o As part of the agreement, the student must attend all lessons for core subjects: English Language and Literature, Maths, Science and RE. The only exception to this would be where an absence from school is for a finite period of time, for example to complete a project. In this instance, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with work missed in their own time.
- o There will be consultation with relevant subject teachers involved, before any allowance is made.
- o Parents/carers should be aware that for lessons that are not attended due to the arrangement, that it will not be possible to provide a report in that subject each half term.
- o The absence during the school day will be marked as an authorised absence for registration purposes.
- o There will be no fee change; no remission will apply to this arrangement.
- o The student is expected to adopt a mature approach to leaving and arriving at the front reception in a timely manner during the school day on day(s) affected by the alternative arrangement: it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that she arrives on time to be collected, and returns to lessons on time following time out of school.
- o As a school, we must receive references from the current sports coach/agent/manager which confirms the elite level of performance/pathway being pursued, and therefore the need for the curriculum allowance.
- o If a student is entered into a national competition held during the same time as mock examinations, departments would do their best to accommodate this and make alternative arrangements for examinations to be sat. However, exams sat at alternative times would not count in the same way as the mock examinations.
- o It is entirely the responsibility of parents/carers to check the health and safety and safeguarding provision in place for offsite activities their daughter is participating in.

Curriculum adaptation for students over the age of 18

All departments and teaching staff are aware of, and trained in, the need for adaptive learning practices and they are made specifically aware where students have previously covered content or are re-taking courses due to challenges – planning and teaching is adjusted accordingly and in line with individual needs of the students.

Where necessary, students may attend additional classes or receive individualised support/guidance. The progress of all students, including those over the age of 18, is closely tracked and interventions

take place where necessary. Tutors and Heads of Department as well as the Sixth Form Leadership team continue to closely monitor learning and curriculum provision for students and adapt teaching and learning strategies as required to take into account the learning needs of students over the age of 18.

All teaching staff ensure that all teaching and learning, including for those students over the age of 18, follows the guidelines as set out in the Prevent duty: to uphold and to not undermine fundamental British values; including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.